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Message Text

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53
ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 L-01 SP-02

INR-05 DODE-00 /037 W
---------- 110999
R 201013Z FEB 75
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2589
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1205

LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EAID, LA
SUBJECT: TALK WITH DEFENSE MINISTER SISOUK NA CHAMPASSAK

1. DEFMIN SISOUK INFORMED ME LAST NIGHT THAT HE BELIEVES HE SUCCEEDED AT CABINET MEETING IN THWARTING A PATHET LAO EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A 58 - 42 PERCENT RATIO FOR DIVIDING FOREIGN AID BETWEEN THE VIENTIANE SIDE AND THE PATHET LAO. THIS SILLY SCHEME SURFACED LAST WEEK IN THE FORM OF A WORKING PAPER PREPARED BY SECSTATE FOR FINANCE BOUTSABONG. SISOUK HAD BEEN BRIEFED BY MANN AND SENIOR AID STAFFERS SO WAS WELL PREPARED FOR THIS QUESTION. SISOUK SAID HE TOOK THE WIND OUT OF THE PATHET LAO'S SAILS BY POINTING OUT THAT THEY WERE SHORT-CHANGING THEMSELVES WITH THIS PROPOSITION AS INCLUSION OF CHINESE ROAD PROJECT IN THEIR PERCENTAGE WOULD GIVE VIENTIANE SIDE THE BULK OF COMMODITIES RECEIVED. PHOUMI SUGGESTED THAT SCHEME BE GIVEN FURTHER STUDY. SISOUK IS ANNOYED THAT FINMIN NGON DID NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR A PROBLEM WHICH IS CLEARLY WITHIN HIS SPHERE.

2. SISOUK SAID THAT HE HAD JUST RETURNED FROM PAKSE WHERE HE HAD MET WITH PRINCE BOUN OUM AND HAD TALKED HIM OUT OF ARRESTING LOCAL STUDENT LEADER KHAMSAI. BOUN OUM DEEMS THAT KHAMSAI IS
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GUILTY OF LESE-MAJESTE IN CRITIZING CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM

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IN THE SOUTH. WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THIS AFFAIR CLOSELY AS
ITS IMPLICATIONS ARE BOVIOUS. SISOUK STATED THAT BOUN OUM DOES
NOT UNDERSTAND THE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY FOLLOW
THE ARREST OF KHAMSAI AND ACCUSED SISOUK OF BEING A COWARD FOR
REFUSING TO SEEK A HEAD-ON CONFRONTATION WITH STUDENTS. SISOUK
SENSES, AS MANN AND I DID LAST WEEK IN PAKSE, A CURIOUS DESIRE
TO GO DOWN FIGHTING ON THE PART OF BOUN OUM AND HIS HENCHMEN.

3. SISOUK SAID THAT ANOTHER VILLAGER HAD BEEN SHOT BY SOLDIERS
AT A ROADBLOCK NEAR THAKHEK ON FEBRUARY 15 BUT THAT THINGS HAD
BEEN SMOOTHED OVER NOTWITHSTANDING INTENSE PATHET LAO PRESSURE
ON THE FAMILY TO MAKE THE MAN A MARTYR. HE ALSO OPINED THAT
THE CONTINUING PROTEST AT NONG BOK OVER THE EARLIER (JANUARY
9) INCIDENT WAS ALIENATING VILLAGERS THERE WHO RESENTED THE
FACT THAT THE EARLIER "MARTYR" HAD NOT BEEN BURIED. ASIDE FROM
THE CONDITION OF THE CORPSE, THE KEY CONSIDERATION TO THEM IS
THAT THE SOUL IS FLOATING IN THE AREA READY TO PREY ON THEM.
WHITEHOUSE

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